



CIRCULAR TO INSPECTORS.

EMPIRE DAY.

GENTLEMEN,—I earnestly invite your co-operation in having "Empire Day" duly celebrated this year in all our schools. In the other Provinces of Canada, as well as in Ontario, the 23rd of May, 1899, inaugurated an important event in the cultivation of British patriotism among the Canadian people. As intimated, last year the Education Department of Ontario, on the 1st of March, 1899, adopted the following Minute:—

"The school day immediately preceding the 24th of May shall be devoted specially to the study of the history of Canada in its relation to the British Empire, and to such other exercises as might tend to increase the interest of the pupils in the history of their own country and strengthen their attachment to the Empire to which they belong—such day to be known as 'Empire Day.'"

According to this Minute, "Empire Day" this year falls on Wednesday, the 23rd of May, and it is desirable that every suitable means should be adopted to foster among the youth of our country a high national sentiment. The subject is specially important this year, since the struggle in which England is now engaged, and in which Canada is taking a prominent part, will call forth increased love for British institutions. Canada is helping to make history, and the youth of our country should be taught fully to appreciate their position as citizens of the British Empire. It should be understood that true patriotism does not consist in empty shouts of acclaim, in mere professions of loyalty or in any spirit of national boasting. The patriotism to be cultivated among the children of our schools should be that which results from a just appreciation of what the nation has become because of its spirit of freedom, its laws, its customs, its form of government and its triumphant onward march as a great civilizing agency. For the children of our schools to appreciate rightly what they owe to the British Empire it is necessary for them to know something of its traditions, its perils, its stages of growth, its sources of power and its many glorious achievements. In other words, the patriotism to be cultivated in our schools should be broad, and marked by intelligence and high moral principle.

It is not necessary that the manner in which "Empire Day" is to be observed should be indicated in detail. As was done last year, some intimation of the following nature might guide the teachers and trustees:

The Forenoon.

In each of the classes, part of the forenoon might be occupied by the teacher taking as his subject the British Empire, and discussing in a general

way, for example ;—its extent and resources; its history and institutions; its literature and distinguished statesmen, authors, soldiers, etc. ; the excellence of the British form of government, and the privileges which all British subjects enjoy ; the great extent and magnificent resources of Canada, together with some account of its system of government—Dominion, Provincial, Municipal, Educational ; historical incidents in connection with the development of the Dominion ; and the part it has taken in the unity of the Empire. An historical reference to the Union Jack, explaining when and how it became the national emblem, would be opportune. It should be understood that the aim of the teacher, in any outline he may give to his pupils, will be to cultivate that spirit of Canadian patriotism which will be marked by intelligence and the highest moral sentiment, and which will be adapted to the age and attainments of the pupils.

The Afternoon.

A suitable programme can easily be arranged for the afternoon, the exercises commencing at 2.30 p.m. These might consist of patriotic recitations, songs, readings by the pupils, and addresses by trustees, clergymen, and such other persons whose services may be available. At the afternoon exercises, the trustees and public generally should be invited to be present, and during both forenoon and afternoon the British flag or Canadian ensign should be hoisted over the school building. With these objects in view, you will kindly give the necessary directions to the teachers of schools under your supervision, in order that throughout the entire Province " Empire Day," in the closing year of the century, may be duly celebrated.

R. HARCOURT,

Minister of Education.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,
TORONTO, March, 1900.

Cir. 42,

500, Mch., 1900.



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